THORNS AND FLOWERS

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THORNS AND FLOWERS.

BY

LOUIS BELROSE, JR.,

"Mon verre n'est pas grand, mais je bois dans mon verre."

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.
1879.

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I WANDERED where the spring had decked a glade
With blossoms native to the forest wild;
And clambered where the mossy rocks were piled,
To breathe the perfume and enjoy the shade.

Then plucking random bud and brier, made
This simple wreath, admiring like a child;
But now, as if my fingers had defiled,
The leaves all wither, and the colors fade.

If worth acceptance, take it, and the vale
Shall furnish what the warmer days have born;
But if, unskilled to please, endeavor fail,

Let pity mingle with deservèd scorn,
For though the flowers that I touch grow pale,
My blood has tipped the point of every thorn.

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THE TALE OF AN ANCIENT MARINER.

THIS tale was writ by one who now is dead—
A sailer in the ships upon the sea.
Poor soul! a tempest drove him on a lee-
Shore, and upon his flesh the dog-fish fed.

When Atropos's scissors cut his thread
And cable both at once, there came to me
This yarn, which shows what spinning there must be
When woman turns the heart, and rhyme the head.

Poor fellow! we were chums for years at school,
And though his wit was hardly then first-rate,
Nobody ever thought he'd make a fool.

But love soon worked him into such a state
That I was forced to let our friendship cool.
How sad to die so young and yet too late!

When I was young and life was dear
I sailed about the sea,
And there amid the boisterous waves
Found sweet tranquillity.

For woman—bless her—by the rule,
Was left upon the shore;
It isn't well that she should dwell
Aboard a man-o'-war;

And so when once the sail was set
We bade good-bye to care,
Like men who knew no Delilah
Could catch us by the hair.

Or if, on leave, by some mishap
We lost a lock or two,
We'd go aboard, increase our hoard,
And wait until it grew.

But man in single-blessedness
Is never quite secure,
And this could not be always thus,
Nor even long endure;

For he who stands the middle watch
And gazes on the skies,
Must either turn his thoughts to love,
Or else philosophize.

And I did both. When Venus shone,
Before the break of day,
I wished that I could take a stroll
Along the milky way.

Or, when Diana led the chase,
Methought if I were Mars,
The men that make the almanac
Might count on other stars.

Then sometimes, anchored in a fog,
When things grew awful dull,
I'd dream of metaphysics and
The incognoscible.

Philosophy ! Philosophy !
But in the torrid zone
How cope with the "unknowable,"
Or even the unknown?

Alas ! alas ! all flesh is grass ;
And grass is hay when dry,
Which maketh us combustible
Beneath a tropic sky.

And it grew very warm that cruise—
'Twas in the Caribbees ;
I haven't felt it so much since
By several degrees.

And this it was revealed the truth
(Which I'm discoverer of)
That heat, a mode of motion,
Is yet a mode of love.

O strange correlativity!
Transmigratory one!
I'll write an ode on that some day,
And call it, "To the Sun."

"Father of life and light," I'll say,
Or words to that effect,
"How wonderous, how glorious
Art thou! though somewhat specked.

"My feeble fancy fain would climb
Thy genealogic tree,
And trace through space till time efface
Thy hazy pedigree:

"Would travel to the utmost verge
Of ancestorial mist,
To watch the waking of the force
That gave the primal twist;

"Then mark the metamorphoses,
Through varied pull and shove,
From planetary genesis
To protoplasmic love;

"And onward to the tender thrill
That agitates my breast
When beauty—" but, by Jove, enough!
I fear that I've digressed.

Where was I? Oh!—the Caribbees-
Yes, it grew very warm,
And certain signs were manifest
Which indicate a storm.

The storm it burst and did its worst ;
It blew and blew and blew,
Until I swore I'd go ashore
And evermore lie to.

Now seamen young and seamen old,
Before it be too late,
Upon the danger of my course
'Twere well to meditate.

The dread of things we know not of
Should make us rather stand
A sea of troubles on the sea
Than fly to worse on land ;

For love's a flame and flesh is hay,
As proven here above,
Which doth explain exceeding plain
We shouldn't play with love.

So when your blood begins to boil
And fizz beyond control,
Do what I should have done myself—
Get orders to the Pole.

Of course, amid the bears and ice
It may be hard to dwell,
But better far turn Esquimaux
Than roast outright in—well,

Confound the word! it always comes
When this theme's treated of;
So many endings rhyme with *hell*,
So very few with *love*.

And here connected with my tale
It may not seem amiss,
If I respectfully submit
A short parenthesis:

Beside the stormy Chesapeake,
  On placid Severn's shore,
There lies an antiquated town,
  Not far from Baltimore.

And in this town of old renown
  A vast academy,
Where youth may learn all things in turn
  Pertaining to the sea.

May learn the rules which regulate
  Our courses by the sun's,
And teach the young idea to shoot
  Both great and little guns.

May learn to make and shorten sail,
  To tack and eke to wear,
And work the fleets that may be built
  When cash is not so rare.

With many more accomplishments
  Which their estate beseem;
To fire torpedoes *à propos*
  And navigate with steam.

But though to fit them for the sea
  This course is wisely planned,
There's nothing in the whole four years
  To fit them for the land.

And such remarkable neglect
  Has grieved me all the more,
As seamen oftenest, like ships,
  Are lost upon the shore.

For man may brave Poseidon's wrath
  And flout the darts of Mars,
But when the sea-born goddess strikes,
  Egad, look out for scars!

What courage so invincible?
What fortitude so mighty?
What heart so steeled but it must yield
To Venus Aphrodite?

Now since they're taught in self-defence
To use the sword and glove,
Why not continue one step more
And teach them how to love?

Should time prevent, the Board might lay
The chaplain on the shelf;
And if no better can be found,
I'll take the place myself.

In fact, though modesty forbids
Allusion to my worth,
It may be I'm the very man
To occupy that berth;

For I've employed in deep research
A dozen years of toil,
And made a most remarkable
Expense of midnight oil.

By which I've learnt, with careful use
Of methods quite my own,
That, as to laws of motion, love
Resembles the cyclone.

A storm that's only dangerous
When navigators fail
To see by shifting of the wind
Which way they ought to sail;

And which, to those who understand,
Becomes an aiding force,
That often serves to fill their sails
And help them on their course.

So rules in case of storms at sea,
Mutatis mutandis,
Cover the peril greater still
That met with on the land is.

Therefore, if what I now propose
Should gain due approbation,
I hope to pay with interest
The debt I owe the nation.

I'll teach the art of lying-to
Upon the proper tack,
Whereby one obviates the risk
Of being ta'en aback ;

As also, if the storm approach,
How near it's safe to stay,
And when to stand and ride it out,
And when to run away.

With every delicate device
That seamen need employ
To 'scape the gyves of would-be wives—
Sweet partners of our joy!

But, as regards my narrative,
I'm painfully aware
That simple technicalities
Are neither here nor there.

So now, to hasten on our way,
We'll just select a few
Of those in turn who made me burn,
And pass them in review.

The first, that is to say, of course,
The first in this connection,
For ere my legs wore pantaloons
My heart was in subjection,

The first was young—was very young,
But ripe beyond her years;
With all the woman's wealth of bloom
Without the woman's fears;

With every grace of form and face
Enhanced by passion's yearning,
Yet all the sweet unconsciousness
That burns nor knows the burning.

Taller than most; of that proud growth
Of solid flesh that's seen
Where Tiber turns between the hills—
A pure Trasteverine.

The blue-black hair that seemed to cast
A shadow on her liquid eyes
Fell straight, without a wave, beyond
The large voluptuous thighs;

Fell heavily and smooth, and damp
And cold upon the velvet skin,
Whose dusky pallor hid the glow
Of rich, warm blood within.

Hid it except where on the cheek
It flushed the pale disguise,
And where the lips in virgin bloom
Were ripe for sacrifice:

Were ripe, but guarded by an arm
That I shall ne'er forget;
Jésu, what muscle! 'Pon my soul,
My ears are ringing yet.

Her features, charming when she smiled,
At rest resembled those
That tell us of the Roman dames
On ancient cameos.

And soon there came a sweet reserve
  At times, that would suggest
The gravity of strong desire
  By stronger will repressed.

Her motion was a gallant ship's
  That helm and sail obeys:
The bosom that she proudly bore
  Had never hung in stays:

A bosom fit for any god
  To rest his head upon;
But now, alas!—ah, who can tell
  What those six babes have done?

Finis.—The next was gentle, blonde,
  Calm, continent and meek,
Nay, chaster than an eight-day clock;
  I loved her for a week.

And might be loving still perhaps,
  Had not another fellow
Stepped in and run away with her
  Before my plan was mellow.

And thus abruptly terminates
  Adventure number two—
But really I've enough of this;
  Kind reader, haven't you?

Don Juan, as the story goes,
  Booked over ninety score;
Which must have been, beside the sin,
  A most infernal bore.

And then I ne'er got far enough
  To make it interesting:
Virtuous, simple, poor and plain—
  It's not worth while protesting.

O youthful innocents, before
You love be sure you're rich;
An empty purse, except in verse,
Wins neither dame nor ——.

For beauty's well, and wit is well,
And courage sometimes counts,
But all combined must fall behind
Your cash in large amounts.

Ah, let me leave this saddening theme
For one that brings relief,
Lest "saddening doubly" by its length,
My tale be brought to grief.

Ah, let me turn from charms that smite,
To dam my weeping eyes,
And tell of her whose love is peace—
Whose worship makes me wise.

Long, long ago, while yet a boy,
  There passed among my dreams
A vision, hardly seen at first
  Except in fitful gleams;

But which as time went slowly on
  Became, or seemed to be,
The figure of a woman veiled,
  And bright ineffably;

Till like a star that glows at eve
  When veiling beams depart,
The gradual beauty of her face
  Came forth and filled my heart;

Filled all my being with the warmth
  Of uncontrolled desire,
Lighting my spirit as a flame,
  And chastening as a fire.

No longer seen but in my dreams,
A phantom of the night,
That only lingered till the dawn
To fade before the light,

But ever present drawing me
Away from meaner things,
To follow it through all the world
In all its wanderings.

Brighter the vision seemed to me
Than aught on earth beside,
More worthy of a man's desire
Than any mortal bride.

No longer did I waste my love
On every passing maid;
'Twas hers—all hers, and when she smiled
I felt it all repaid:

A smile, a hope that led me on
  Over the land and sea;
A promise for the years to keep;
  A guide incessantly.

And often as we went she'd change,
  Be distant, dark, or clear
And brighter, than she'd been before,
  As if the time drew near

When I should, clasping her my own,
  At once fulfil the quest,
And gain for constancy reward
  Of peace and joy and rest.

Around the Mother Isle we roamed,
  The dear old Motherland,
Where oft she came so near I 'most
  Might touch her with my hand;

But then the wind would westward blow
Over the dismal sea,
And bring with soft, enchanting clouds
A veil of mystery.

And on I went throughout the weird
Fair lands beyond the Rhine,
Where tints from many a golden tress
Lurk in the golden wine;

But ever drew my love away,
And in her distant eyes
Appeared, through rifts of gathering mist,
The light of other skies.

Little the heart that lives apart
Within a state's confine;
Little the wit that's cut to fit
A nation's border line:

But yet must sympathy prevail :
  Long live my Fatherland !
France ! May her foes forever fall ;
  Her friends forever stand !

Then came I, westward journeying,
  Unto the banks of Seine,
Where meet the waves of Burgundy
  And waters of Champagne : *

When lo, my guide took leave of me,
  And smiled an *au revoir*
So sweet that I was full of joy,
  Knowing the time not far.

How lightly beats the careless heart
  That all along was sad !
None but the sons of sorrow know
  The joy of being glad.

---

* The map and context would indicate Charenton, but the author probably meant Paris.

And lightly went my steps, for now
In many an open door
I met the long-familiar friends
Seen but in dreams before.

Streets where I'd often in my sleep
Passed with uncertain tread
Were thronged with living multitudes
For noon-lit miles ahead ;

And right and left the by-ways ran
Through all the country round,
So vast I rubbed my eyes and then
Stamped on the solid ground.

'Twas real ! Up and down I went
Through every part, and came
Back to the place I'd started from
At early dawn, the same

In which the vision last had smiled,
And where I'd lost a shade
I found in lovely flesh and blood
A breathing, smiling maid.

Like, but how much more beautiful!
Her presence seemed to be
Surrounded by an atmosphere
Of perfect sympathy:

Without a fault, without a line
To fairly question of,
Yet all her gracious features still
But handmaids to her love.

I never had the gift of gab,
And so my words were few;
In fact, to tell the honest truth,
I'd rather bill than coo.

But mindful of my long attent,
She promptly named the day;
And good old father Littré 'twas
Who gave the bride away.

O cullers of eclectic sweets,
Ye know not, never can,
The peaceful joys that recompense
A fitly-married man:

Then when the withered heart hath ceased
Preliminary aching,
And wedded union sanctifies
Prosaic baby-making.

But here my tale must have an end,
Like others, false or true,
With all the getting ready done,
And all the work to do.

THE TALKING OAK.

LIFE'S varied seasons fraught with pain
Have each its own peculiar joy;
This cheers the babe, and that the boy;
'Tis love, ambition, ease or gain:
But though the greatest oft attain
An ecstasy beyond defining,
None come so early nor remain
So long as that of dining.

And though the nations each advance
A claim for some unequalled dish,
Some excellence of game or fish,
That prejudice will oft enhance,
When once you're weaned (before, perchance,
But that's a question might embarrass),
There's no place in the world like France,
And none in France like Paris.

Here cooks are born, here cooks aspire
  Through mystic art, pre-Raphaelite,
  With almost nothing, if not quite,
To calm the hungry soul's desire.
When heated on that sacred fire,
  The pride of their vocation,
The merest grill becomes a lyre
  Aglow with inspiration.

And then the waiters' looks reveal
  A sympathy with him that feeds;
  An instinct that divines the needs,
Which if you don't you ought to feel.
No vulgar bustle, but a zeal
  So mixed with tact you scarce observe it;
For me I own that half the meal
  Is in the way they serve it.

What wonder if, when tinged with blues
By actual or fancied ill,—
A falling rent, impending bill,
Unfaithful dame or distant muse,
I leave my cheerless rooms and choose
Some house of ancient reputation,
Where solid comfort gently woos
To liquid consolation?

If there I stow myself away
In some snug corner all alone,
And straight to willing ears make known
An inward need of holiday;
Then call the trusty *sommelier*
And hint the nature of my sorrow?
It's ten to one he'll find a way
To calm it till the morrow.

Alone, I said, but what I mean
Is unaccompanied by guest
Or friend; alone among the rest
Of those the vesper shades convene:
Who come to feed, to talk, be seen,
Solicit or supply temptation,
Or else, like me, to give their spleen
A good deoppilation.

I like all sorts of solitude;
The mountain, forest, vale and sea
Have each a different charm for me,
Adapted to a different mood:
But then they're apt to make you brood
Too long before your sorrow hatches,
If out of sorts; a process food
With good old wine despatches.

Old wine! what liquid melody
In these two words! what visions rise
Of all things good beneath the skies,
Of all things good beneath the sea!
And yet, alas! how often we
O'erwhelm with floods of senseless twattle
The wealth of whispered poesy
Exhaling from a bottle.

Think not I grudge the tribute due
Of pure libations freely poured
To friendship round the social board;
Not I; but faithful friends are few;
While bottles, whether false or true,
Before they set the soul a-flowing,
Must pour their contents into you;
Which warns one if he's knowing.

Nor judge me so devoid of grace,
So impious as to underrate
The pleasures of the tête-à-tête;
I own the charm of loosened stays,
And well-fed woman's winning ways,
But that's beside the question;
Love's not my theme—and then, it plays
The devil with digestion.

. . . . . .

Westward beyond the city's zone,
(So called because to pass you pay),
There lies the wood of Rouveray;
An ancient forest, better known,
What's left, as taking from Boulogne
A name you hear until you're
Inclined to think "the boy," half grown,
To some was most familiar.

But this of course can hardly be,
Whereas what I shall now relate
Is easy to authenticate;
I had it from an old oak tree.
Don't smile as if you doubted me;
They talk; and for a sample
Of what they've done in verse just see
The Laureate's example.

Salut!—'Twas thus: one afternoon
Unoccupied I sauntered forth,
And shaped my course say west by north
(It's always pleasant here in June),
To listen to my wood-birds' tune;
A favorite distraction
While summer's in her honeymoon,
And fresh enough for action.

Which ere I knew had taken me
  Beyond the grounds of Bagatelle,
  Where seven strokes upon a bell
Disturbed my gentle reverie.
Quoth I, no park can ever be
  So fit since Eve became a sinner,
As is the *Château de Madrid*
  About the time for dinner.

And there I went. You know it, eh?
  Ah, really? Well, it's worth your while
  To go. You'll find it near a mile
Beyond the walls, upon a way
That skirts the *bois;* but simply say
  Madrid, and any cab will take you.
On foot you couldn't go astray,
  But then your legs might ache you.

My dinner was, as you'll infer,
A good one, for of course you know
The castellan of this château
Is famous as *restaurateur;*
And should King Francis' spirit err
This way, the valiant chevalier,
Beside creating quite a stir,
Would find most royal cheer.

But spirits, hang it, never budge
Unless you pay them, now-a-days,
While he who enters this place pays,
And roundly too, if I'm a judge.
It's more than I can do to grudge
My money when I'm pleased, however:
Your calculating man's a drudge,
For all he seems so clever.

And then it's not so much the mere
  Eating and drinking counts with me,
  As 'tis the nicer luxury
Of perfume, shed from *souvenirs*.
And that is in perfection here,
  For those who like it aromatic,
As François when he chased the deer
  Made this his home venatic.

You know it's generally agreed
  That he was monstrous fond of fun,
  But had, comparatively, none
While lingering captive in Madrid ;
Which made him feel, as soon as freed,
  Like ordering a forest *château ;*
For he was keen for hounds and steed,
  And fresh as a—tomato.

And thus it is that once there stood
A place for royal high carouse,
Where now there stands an eating-house.
Thus then as now the wine was good,
And thus the deer that roamed the wood
Were brought (they mostly then were game ones),
And some were fed, and some were food,
The wild ones and the tame ones.

. . . . . .

The night was calm ; the birds that sing
At vespers now had gone to rest,
And with the flowers, joy-oppressed,
Were dreaming of departed spring.
The moon was up, and everything
Conspired to work a charm, and so forth—
Which prompted me to have them bring
My coffee and to go forth.

Then choosing out a cozy place
  Beside the railing, near the gate,
  I sat me down to contemplate:
And happening in my chair to face
That ancient oak about whose base
  You'd look for Druids *à priori*,
I tried to make my thoughts retrace
  What would have been its story.

The night was still, and it was late:
  From time to time a silver laugh
  Would sound some bottle's epitaph,
Or crushed beneath a *coupé's* weight
The gravel would expostulate;
  Then silence—then the fragrant rustle
Of skirts retiring would create
  A momentary bustle.

But soon both sights and sounds went by
  Unnoticed, and I sat absorbed
  In gazing where the moon, full-orbed,
Between the branches cocked an eye,
And seemed to smile in sympathy ;—
  Gazing until there came a whisper,
As if from leaves when almost dry,
  Or, may be, somewhat crisper.

At first I thought it was the wind,
  But then I seemed to catch a word,
  And finally was sure I heard
Articulation well defined.
Now miracles of any kind
  Had never yet occurred to me,
In fact their place was not assigned
  In my philosophy.

But then I'm one of those that own
  What *is*, although they can't explain,
  And this time doubting was in vain.
I thought of Mr. Edison—
But phonograph and telephone
  Together would have failed to clear it;
And certainly the moonlight shone
  Too strong for any spirit.

I looked around, but couldn't see
  A soul outside or in the flesh;
  And now the thing began afresh—
It surely was that ancient tree—
And, what was more, it spoke to me;
  And spoke in French the purest,
Barring some words apparently
  The language's maturest.

"Excuse me, sir," it said; "surprise
Is natural—do I interrupt?
I see you've dined" (its word was supped);
"I thought that age might authorize
An indiscretion. Oh, don't rise;
I couldn't possibly be seated—
No, nothing; thank you. I'll be wise.
My sap's now overheated.

"We seldom talk to men, it's true,
But if we did they'd seldom hear,
For that requires a special ear,
Which, sir, I'm glad to find in you.
The fact is, I was getting blue
For want of just such conversation;
These sticks are not worth talking to,
With all their 'cultivation.'

"How times do change! When I was young
We treated age with some respect;
But now these upstarts here object
To listening, so I hold my tongue.
A pretty lot to live among!
Why, sir, the trees of that complexion
Used to die out, or never sprung,
With natural selection.

"Those were the days; and then such sport!
Old stags that often used to dash
Beneath my branches, with the crash
Of hound and hoof, and all the court
Following hard in royal sort.
And big wild boars in hundreds rooting,
Where now your gentlemen resort
For what's called pigeon-shooting.

"You'll think that I'm a royalist.
But no. The rings about my core
May still be what they were of yore,
As first impressions will persist;
But every summer swells the list,
And every ring, as time advances,
Makes up its fibre with a twist
To suit the circumstances.

"And now, sir, I'm republican.
But, bless your soul, must such as I
Give up their tastes and turn *canaille*,
Because they preach the rights of man?
Cordieu! why since the world began
No two things yet were ever equal;
All bagged by some low partisan,
That's what will be the sequel.

"But there—I hope you'll pardon me
For this, it's one of my old tricks;
Whenever I talk politics
My sap, though no one disagree,
Gets all worked up, as if a tree
Were authorized to turn haranguer!
We might make poles for Liberty,
Or lend a branch to hang her.

"And wherefore should we thus repine
At others' sins and others' wrong,
When all our lives might glide along
So pleasantly? We've rain and shine,
Why fret if men lack bread or wine?
It only makes us die the faster;
Look at this wasted trunk of mine
Half full of stones and plaster.

"No use! I've tried: it's in the grain.
But, thank my stars, from time to time
Through every branch there seems to climb
A genial warmth of summer rain;
Old memories come back again
Of youthful days, and on occasion
I quite forget the moral strain,
And sing a song Rabelaisian.

"'Though Fame beguile,
And Fortune smile,
One toast shall e'er be mine—
A blooming lass,
A brimming glass,
And a tear for auld lang syne.

"'If friends should fail,
And foes assail,
Need honest heart repine?
With a blooming lass,
And a brimming glass,
I'll live in auld lang syne.'

"That's Rabelais; bless him, though his rhymes
Were always bad, I loved the man;
So jolly—when he once began
(I've heard him sing a hundred times)
His voice would drown the castle chimes,
And then itself be drowned in laughter
On some odd whack at faults or crimes,
A game he still was after.

"The stories that he told, I grant,
Were broad; but here he forced the note
To suit the times, and when he wrote
The worst were not found dissonant.
He laughed and loved—despising cant—
With all his great heart, warm and mellow;
Hated by priest and protestant;
Reformer and good-fellow.

"It seems to me if I'd the luck
To be a man I'd strive to be
So hated of hypocrisy.
I'd strike it, as old Rabelais struck;
I'd bare both arms, and run a muck
Against the sow and all her farrow.
But read him: 'Break the bone, and suck
The substantific marrow.'

"Perhaps, and rightly too, you'll say,
That when he'd strangers to divert
He killed his pigs before dessert;
That was the master mocker's way.
But I'm all out of sorts to-day.
Such nonsense, too. For all my growling,
I couldn't bring myself to slay
A single little sowling.

"I really hope you wont suppose
I can't be cheerful; bless your heart,
Just let me get the proper start.
One doesn't see such larks as those
I've seen for nothing. If he chose
To play propriety he couldn't.
I've often tried to make them close
The curtains, but they wouldn't.

"No further back than yesterday—"
Here the tree stopped. Then came a sound
Like *Monsieur* thrice; I looked around,
And heard the boy go on to say,
"*Ne craint-il pas l'humidité?*"
I thought it *was* becoming chilly,
So asked him what I had to pay,
And felt a trifle silly.

I'd let the latest hour go by,
Hoping that oak would tell a few
Of those good things I knew it knew.
The cabs were gone; the moon not high
Enough to dot de Musset's *i*,
But then I liked the thought of walking.
Reader, if you go out there, try
To set the tree a-talking.

THE LEAF AND THE KISS.

SHE left me for a warmer land
And clearer skies:
She left me for the tideless strand;
And leaving, let me kiss her hand
And mouth and eyes.

She went to meet the spring half way,
As birds depart;
And all the gloom of winter lay
Like death upon the land that day,
And filled my heart.

She left, but promised, like the bird
That leaves its nest,
To come again: and word by word
Between her broken sighs I heard
She loved me best.

And when I wrote I begged her find
Some spot I knew;
Some spot whose charms had oft combined
To swell my breast, and call to mind
Sweet thoughts and true,

And there alone, to think of me
And name my name.
It seemed that mountain, vale, and sea
Must hold my love in memory,
And breathe,—*Il t'aime.*

I begged her, if she'd cure my grief,
To send a kiss;
To send it on a primrose leaf:
And then it was, to cure my grief,
She sent me this.

The lingering perfume of the South
Was on it then ;
The sweetness of her own dear mouth.
But leaves once plucked must die with drouth,
Nor bloom again.

It withered as beneath the blast ;
Its color fled :
But ere the fleeting color past,
Our love, she said must always last,
Our love was dead.

Full many a gift I treasure yet
Lies hidden here
Within my quaint old cofferet :
On some for seal sweet lips were set,
On some a tear.

But none like this among them all
Can move me now :
It tells of joys that turn to gall :
Its crumbling ashy veins recall
A broken vow.

To those by whose influence the Motto, "IN GOD WE TRUST," *was put upon the coins of the United States.*

IS there no shame that thus ye dare disgrace
The fleeting winter of a poor old god?
That thus ye filch his venerable name
To deck your idol and to cover o'er
Your bestial rites with stale hypocrisy?
Or has the die, less brazen than yourselves,
Altered your motto, and refused to stamp
"*The* God we Trust" upon the yielding gold?

And yet are days not distant when the thought
Of him ye now blaspheme had made you quake
And half forget your plotting in your fear.
But oh, how dimly burns thy smouldering hell!
Poor shadow of a great divinity.

Where is the terror of the mighty hand
Whose infant strength could strangle Hercules,
And shake the lofty throne of thundering Jove?
Didst thou not bend before thy holy sign
The rabble hordes and yoke their fiery lust?
Did not thy vicar reign upon the earth
Above the kings? and make them fear thy wrath
More than the wrath of all their enemies?
Were not thy altars laden with the deeds
Of fairest virtue and of foulest crime,
While men in every act, or great, or small,
Besought thy help, thy sanction, or thy grace?
Yea, and though all thy ancestors were dead,
Did they not give thee immortality?

Alas! O god, how time has mocked and marred
And wasted thee! that what is vile should dare
To prostitute thy name, and what is best

Should blush to see the years upon thy brow,
And like a worn jade turn thee out to die
In the lean pastures of the Incognoscible.

How sad a thing it is that when a god
Grows old, as all have done and ever must,
He cannot leave the government of earth
In younger hands, and quietly retire
To some secluded region, far away
From all the strife and tumult of the world.
Thus would the many weaknesses of age
Go unremarked, and thus his waning days
Be peaceful, and his memory remain
Forever cherished in the hearts of men.
But no; when once his prime is reached and passed,
And each new year brings new infirmities,
His priests begin to tremble lest the herds
They govern in his name should lift their eyes

And mark the dotage of their deity.
The fear that made them valiant in his youth
To work his will is then gone out of them,
And they who served him, then would make his age
The servant of their dear ascendancy.

At first a little fard is judged enough
To hide time's ravage from the vulgar gaze,
But when the faltering step, the sightless eye
Foretell that dissolution which must end
Their bloated reign, oh, then begins a scene
To make the heart of honor bleed with shame.
Haggard and wan, but tricked for public show
In hues fantastic like a mountebank,
The god is tortured, and when all his shape
In palsied antics writhes, the priests cry out
"Behold the wondrous power of the Lord!"

And many who would worship but have eyes,
Seeing these things, forget the glorious past
To scoff, and mock their long credulity.
And so till all have left him but the blind
And those who lead the blind—and then he dies.

VERSAILLES, July, 1873.

A CENTENNIAL PRAYER, 1876.

O THOU beneath whose valiant hand
The conquest spreads from land to land,
Till earth's extremest ends record
Thy victory and own thee lord;
Thou in whose image gods were fair,
To thee, O man, I raise my prayer!

A century of eager toil
Has turned our wheels and tilled our soil
Since, faithful to their proud decree,
Our fathers made us one and free,
And now we bid the world behold
Our wealth increased a hundred-fold.

May memory of the sterner days
When virtue took the place and praise,

Make clear the truth that wealth, apart,
But swells the purse to shrink the heart;
And leave us like our fathers, strong
To love the right and hate the wrong.

While science with her dawning light
Makes dim the guiding star of night,
And baffled by the break of day
Bewildered millions seek the way,
O keep us on the course begun,
And haste the rising of the sun!

Build us an altar, rock on rock,
Whose time-defying strength shall mock
The winds and floods of doubt, till all
Have spent their weary force and fall:
An altar where the true may bring
The true heart's wealth in offering.

Beneath a single flag unite
The scattered bands that waste their might
Against the leaguèd hosts of vice,
In unavailing sacrifice;
"And, cast in some" more human "mould,
Let the new cycle shame the old!" *

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* John G. Whittier, "Centennial Hymn."

A DRINKING SONG.

WOULDST lie once more on the blooming shore
And dream as in years gone by,
When the boundless sea was fair and free
And calm as the bright blue sky?
Then fill, fill up the cheering cup;
No friend can say me nay,
For "auld lang syne," in the blood-red wine,
Is the toast I drink to-day.

The sun that shines on the purple vines
When life is love and rhyme
Makes rich the juice for a later use
In the weary winter time.
Then fill, fill up the cheering cup;
No friend can say me nay,
For "thine and mine," in the blood-red wine,
Is the health I drink to-day.

A child's delight is the vision bright
Of a future joy supreme;
But the visions turn as we live and learn
To the memory of a dream.
Then fill, fill up the cheering cup;
No friend can say me nay,
For a thing divine is the blood-red wine
That washeth care away.

And who can tell but the doleful knell
Of illusions early fled
May ring full soon ere the happy noon
Of childhood's day be sped?
Then quick, fill up the cheerful cup,
For the sun's maturing beam
In vain would shine on the purple vine
If youth should cease to dream.

LIGHT AND GLADNESS.

LIGHT and gladness on the mountain,
Light and gladness on the sea ;
Hill and vale and shore and city
Feel the warmth and smile on me.

Alpine snows send back the sunshine
Bright as in the midst of May ;
Send it back to where the orange
Blossoms on the shortest day.

From the line of silver ripples
Outward to the cloudless sky
All the waters dance and glitter ;
E'en the wind has ceased to sigh.

Glorious sunlight! naught in nature
Lacks the joy thy beams impart—
Naught but this o'erburdened bosom,
Naught but this my broken heart.

Ah! 'tis doubly sad to suffer
When the very stones rejoice,
Doubly sad to stand forever
First of all in sorrow's choice.

Must I bear my pain in silence?
Must I meekly bend me?—No!
Let a curse be on their gladness,
Cursed all that mock my woe—

Cursed? Nay—alas! I'm weary—
Blest! for all their joy is mine.
Love and sympathy are human,
Let the curse be still divine.

CASTLE HILL, NICE, Dec. 22.

SONG.

WHEN shall the heart of the weary be lightened?
When shall the spirit that pineth go free?
When shall I dwell with the visions that brightened
Youth in its dawning far over the sea?

Wait till the voice of the merry bird ringeth
Lusty and loud with the praises of May,
Flung from the tip of the flower that springeth
Bright as a flame from thy mouldering clay.

Then shall the heart of the weary be lightened;
Then shall the spirit that pineth go free;
Then shalt thou dwell with the visions that brightened
Youth in its dawning far over the sea.

MUST I CHOOSE?

MUST I choose from varied hues
  One sweet maid
Ere I test all the rest?—
  I'm afraid.

Dost thou know, when roses blow,
  Which rose smells
Best of all? which to call
  Queen of dells?

Canst thou say, when birds are gay,
  Which bird sings
Best of all? which to call
  Voice of springs?

Dost not doubt, when stars are out,
Which star seems
Most to glow? which to throw
Softest beams?

Wouldst thou dare, when all are fair,
Name one best,
If to choose were to lose
All the rest?

Fairest maid in time may fade;
Lest one pall,
Let me still, if you will,
Love them all.

APRIL SUN.

WHEN April's sun is beaming
On lovely nature teeming
With creatures fondly dreaming
  Of life and love in May,
What wonder if the gleaming
Of downcast eyes, beseeming
Young passion and redeeming,
  Should steal my heart away?

Alas, the time for wooing
When love's what one's pursuing
Goes by without renewing,
  And thirty's late, I ween;
So let me still be doing
While yet I've voice for cooing,
While yet I've eyes for viewing
  The charms of sweet sixteen.

APRIL SHOWERS.

LET poets praise
What spring displays
In rural ways
When April showers,
And dream their bays
Can feel the rays
That quicken May's
Unfolding flowers;

For me a treat
That's more replete
With visions sweet,
Although it's shocking, 's
A muddy street
With little feet
And ankles neat
And pretty stockings.

A PRESCRIPTION.

A BOSOM made in beauty's mould
To feel the common smart?
Nay, lady, if you've taken cold
You've caught it from your heart.

And should your conscience say I'm right,
Permit me to suggest
That it were well you straight should light
A fire within your breast.

NIRVÂNA.

THE womb quickens:
The babe cries:
Nirvâna.

The wing strengthens:
The bird flies.
Nirvâna.

The tear trickles:
The drop dries.
Nirvâna.

The hand labors:
The lip lies.
Nirvâna.

The brain questions:

The heart sighs.

Nirvâna.

The flame flutters:

The lamp dies.

Nirvâna.

TO A FAIR ADVOCATE OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

THE flowers once, disdaining their estate
  As love's fair messengers and beauty's aid,
Began to rail in honeyed tones at fate
  And vowed that rather than submit they'd fade.
But rage, as if to thwart a plan so silly,
  Heightened each charm till all perfection grew,
Giving a rarer pallor to the lily
  And to the rose's red a deeper hue.
Should any wicked man in malice seem
  To goad your ire or challenge your dissent,
Be patient nor the froward act esteem
  A fell attack upon your sweet content,
For he perchance the skill of anger knows
To paint the lily and adorn the rose.

TO HARRIET.

KIND Harriet, bestow, I beg of thee,
Thine aid upon a pastoral in prose,
For though my theme is meet for poetry,
The Muse in silence holds her classic nose.
But thou art "gentle, artless, wise and just,"
"With much of Christ" in thee like Lady Byron,
And thou canst "pity weakness, sin and lust,"
And sift the truth from errors that environ.
So tell me—if our morals may be kept
From base attempts of genius to deprave,
And "slanders" into dark oblivion swept
By writing *incest* on a poet's grave—
What word of infamy must laymen choose
When Christian pastor tups his tender ewes?

July, 1873.

"O NATIONS!"

O NATIONS! ye that scoff at fallen France,
Or pour your venomed pity on her wound,
What are ye? Do your steady steps advance
Straight to perfection? Has the rugged ground
That baffles her been past and is there naught
To learn from her distress but pride and scorn?
Why, Heavens! were the space of Gallia fraught
With all your vice, and all your weakness borne
On her small breadth, the overburdening mass
Would rend the earth and sink engulfed below!
And yet for others' sins ye cry "alas!"
Look to your own, ye hypocrites, and know
Nor highest mount nor river nor deep sea
Can bound the folly of humanity.

PARIS, March, 1872.

SOLITUDE.

THERE is a solitude whose depth profound
  Is greater than the silent desert knows:
About whose state a deeper gloom is wound
  Than starless night o'er slumbering nature throws—
Whose dreariness unfelt in hermit cell
  Assumes no outward sign or mark of dole,
But with a secret force that naught can quell
  Relentless saps the life and gnaws the soul.
'Tis his who wanders aimless and alone
  Amid a crowded city's busy throng,
Mourning bright hopes by cruel Fortune strown
  Far on the winds, and sorrowing along
Past beauty, joy and sorrow, friend and foe,
Whelmed in a deep infinity of woe.

THE TRUE DIVINITY.

WHY mourn for paradise? why weep your god?
Come, dry your tears and fill a cup with me:
He has but ta'en the road the rest have trod;
Come, here's a health to my divinity:
To woman, bless her! Ere the gods were born
Her worship warmed the tender germ of love,
And on her altar lay the offering torn
From selfishness ere man had looked above.
To woman, bless her! Though our hopes be wrecked
On reason's cold, inhospitable shores,
And all our dreams have waking, rudely checked,
And naught remain of all that faith adores,
As long as blood runs warm and beauty charms
We still shall find a heaven in her arms.

AFTER READING THE MOTTO, "IN GOD WE TRUST," UPON A COIN.

'TIS said the Greeks when Troy had proved her force
Made feigned retreat, and had a story spread
Of wondrous virtues in a wooden horse,
And stuffed him full of men from tail to head.
A stratagem by which, though rather thin
To modern people such as you or I am,
The horse and Trojans both were taken in;
Which played the devil with the town of Priam.
The men who now besiege the Constitution
Would also like to introduce a hobby,
But by a process some call evolution,
The ways of things have changed in war and lobby,
So they, like true descendants of Loyola,
To get him in have put him on the dollar.

Sept., 1873.

TO MR. É. LITTRÉ.

I LAUNCHED my bark upon a lonely sea,
Though all I loved lay weeping on the shore,
And set my sail for climes unknown to me,
And bade my hopes farewell for evermore.
No chart had marked the unfrequented way,
And soon the giddy needle ceased to guide,
While lowering clouds that darkened all the day
Burst into storm and rent the surging tide.
Black rocks that lurked like foes along the night
Rose menacing, but still I struggled on,
Till, lo, afar a friendly beacon-light
Shone o'er the waste and led me to the dawn.
A stranger hand had fed a saving fire—
'Twas thine, O master! may it never tire.

PARIS, Sept. 16, 1873.

SYMPATHY.

THEY who have known a mother's tender care
And learned by absence all the joys of home,
And kept a friend who every hope could share,
And loved a maid ere love began to roam,
And quenched ambition at the fount success,
And clung to God as only faith can cling,
And felt the charm of vice's hot caress,
May lisp of love ; but he alone can sing
Within whose bosom glows the sacred fire
That time has lighted in love's very heart
With passions purified, who strikes the lyre
As one whose sympathy can bear a part
Of each emotion feeling creatures know,
Rejoice with every joy and weep with every woe.

POOR FRANCE.

I.

POOR France! alas, how all thy faults combine
With all thy foes to make a wreck of thee,
And "crown the edifice" of treachery.
Ere Fate had whispered words of her design

To ruin thee, ere thou didst cease to shine
The envy of the world, my heart was free
To love or loathe, but now, in sympathy,
If I could weep, my tears should all be thine.

Poor France! Could I but raise my feeble voice
Above the clamor of the herds that bray
Disdainful pity, or that dare rejoice,

Each wind that sweeps the ocean should convey
A prayer for thee, dear country of my choice,
To happier shores still dear though far away.

II.

I'D TELL of what it cost thee in disgrace,
In precious blood, in treasure and in shame
To cast away thy freedom and acclaim
The Perjurer thy saviour. I would trace

December to Sedan, and then efface
The memory of all that I might blame
By telling how in thy distress there came
Noble resolves that proved thee weak, not base.

The simple story of thy constancy
That grows with every trial and defies
Menace and plot, should form my artless plea.

Yes, and should teach Columbia to despise
The fawning hypocrites who bend the knee
And play the pander to thy enemies.

PARIS, Oct. 6, 1873.

HOW to be envied is the lot of those
Whose placid minds do ever calmly soar
Above the troubled world; who can ignore
The anguish of the present in its throes,

To follow still where idle fancy goes;
Or, undisturbed, with rapt attent explore
The labyrinth of past, or con the lore
That nature's depths from transient eye enclose.

Such is not mine, alas! My cherished theme
Has been begun and left a thousand times,
And noisy rumors make my thoughts to seem

Like timid birds that seldom-ceasing chimes
Frighten from where they still return to teem
On some cathedral spire that into heaven climbs.

"HONNEUR ET PATRIE."

I.

BEFORE the Tuileries, 'neath the Marshals' Hall
From which in line against the western skies
The Obelisk and Arc of Triumph rise,
I stood and mused, while off the calcined wall

Fell the huge blocks and scattered in their fall
The dust of demolition. Where mine eyes
Had seen the chiefs portrayed in warlike guise
Was blacked and crumbling stone, and that was all.

Not all, for just within, on either side,
Where each uplifted eye must needs behold
Remained a narrow space that had defied

The winter and the flame, and as of old,
Bore, in the gilded letters of its pride,
"Honneur et Patrie," on a ground of gold.

II.

"Honneur et Patrie!" And the dazzling glare
That shone from off the motto in the gloom
Was like a word of cheer from out the tomb,
Was like a ray of hope in black despair.

The valiant memories assembled there
Were as the shades of heroes who resume
Their earthly walks, and when disasters loom
Warn of the threatened woes they still must share.

"Honneur et Patrie!" 'Twas the soldier's creed.
But while I gazed my thoughts returning met
The Marshal President, content to lead

Designing knaves, and him whose traitor debt
Is still to pay; and where I late could read
Was nothing but the gloom—the sun had set.

PARIS, Oct. 27, 1873. (During the trial of Marshal Bazaine.)

WHEN love was only love a little maid
Taught me to love her, and her watch in plight
She let me wear, while mine from morn till night
Against her budding breast was gently laid.

And there it heard her heart, and there it stayed
Till it had learned by listening in delight
A pleasant tale ; which throb for throb aright
It tells forever o'er as then betrayed.

Just half my life ago ! and on the sea
And in a hundred lands, since we did part,
The storm has burst and sun has shone on me ;

But ne'er in heedless joy nor dolor's smart
Have I forgot the whispering melody
That tells the story of the virgin heart.

THE "*VIRGINIUS* AFFAIR."

NOW forth, Columbia, draw thy valiant sword!
Now on, ye brave, and let your loud alarms
Strike dumb dispute. Now on! To arms! To arms!
'Tis booty calls, and hath it e'er implored

Freemen in vain? And shall a greedy horde
Of *Spanish* placemen revel in the charms
Of Cuban spoil, while fears of petty harms
Keep from *our own* a merited reward?

Forbid it, Heaven! No! discussion now
Were blackest treason, and the wretch who'd bore
With project of reform, or stir the slough

That holds our leaders' filth, should suffer sore.
To arms! and tress the laurel for your brow;
E'en thieves are heroes when baptized in war!

PARIS, Nov. 20, 1873.

TOAST TO THE NEW YEAR.

FILL full: a bumper to the new-born year!
The heir of ages, may it ever be
A shining honor to its ancestry,
And peace unbroken bless its bright career.

Its heritage, the fruit of toil severe
In lands unnumbered and on every sea,
Is rich confusion, may sweet harmony
Pervade the whole, and all its joys appear.

While just devotion, honoring the shrine
That ancient worth and virtues still adorn,
Marks the descendant of a noble line,

May blighting bigotry relentless torn
Forth by the root where'er it dares to twine
Proclaim the parent of the years unborn.

Dec., 1873.

INTRODUCTION TO A POEM.

WHEN the sad wind, from wandering round the sea
Or through the regions of eternal snow,
Tells to the harp its endless tale of woe,
The chords are moved responsive and set free

A vague and shadowy sound of sympathy.
Not in skilled measure does their grief o'erflow,
But artless plaints that dreary-long and low
Like waves of sorrow die upon the lea.—

Such my poor song; a wind of doleful sighs
That came distinct above the murmuring
Of nature's millions, born to agonize,

Swept o'er my heart. O ye, who've heard this thing
And felt the tears of pity in your eyes,
Attend my lay: in pity's name I sing.

FULL often, when my way is long and lies
Through busy streets in which the dazzling light
Gleams from a thousand lamps until my sight
Is all bedimmed, I raise my weary eyes

Above and rest them on the tranquil skies:
Rest them from little flames that flare and smite
By gazing where the myriad suns of night
Shine with a glow that calms and beautifies.

Thus when the sounds of pain and strife and hate
Assail mine ears and grieve and torture me,
Leaving me, sick of life, to curse at fate,

I raise my thoughts to regions that are free
From earthly cares, and there I contemplate
The silent working of Immensity.

TO MY LITTLE NEIGHBOR.

MY little neighbor, wilt thou leave me here
To wait forever? wilt thou ne'er reope
Thy pleasant window more? and must the hope
Born of thy soft eyes perish, thou so near?

Why dost thou shun me? Have they made thee fear
Their cruel chiding, they who watch o'er thee?
Then ope and leave me, sweet, that I may see
Thy pretty chamber,—even that is dear.

Thy couch has curtains, which the vine and flower
In such entwined confusion overspread,
That in their fall they seem to form a bower

About the spot where lies thy maiden head.
Dear girl, I'd love thee were thy only dower
One little bud from off so fair a bed.

OVER HEAD AND EARS.

LADY, when thou dost linger by the sea,
While not a ripple whispers to the shore,
And all is still, as if the winds no more
Could break its slumber, hath it charms for thee?

Or when its lashed and foaming waters flee
The tempest's wrath, and every sail it bore
Is rent and lost, and midst the horrid roar
Men cry unheard, canst weep in sympathy?

Then hear my grief:—unfathomed as the main,
A sea of passion rolls within my breast,
And long beneath its cruel waves have lain

Wrecked hopes of youth; while now the last, the best
Is struggling all in vain;—alas! in vain,
Though one kind word could set the storm at rest.

"DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS?"

YEA, Love, I've learned the hidden sense they bear
And hold it greatest of all scholarships,
For not a flower that the bright bee sips
But tells of thy sweet self, and calls thee fair.

Some mind me of soft eyes, and azure rare,
And some of pearl-white teeth in balmy lips,
Of matchless hands, of rosy finger-tips,
Or wavy lustre of thy golden hair.

And others, whispering of the charms that gleam
From out the night and turn my blood to fire,
Bring back the vision of a joy supreme;

But ever as I gaze some envious brier
Points to the fatal shadow in the dream
That keeps me ever from my soul's desire.

FALSE SUSPICION.

TO ——.

AND so it seemed my vows were meant
  But as a puling poet's song,
  Whose one reply to such a wrong
Would be a moonlight lone lament?

No, by my soul! If I've misspent
  An idle hour—alas, too long—
  In idler rhymes, when I was young
The trade I learnt took other bent.

'Tis true that ere I deemed it sold
  I drank thy beauty as a wine,
But if thy choice have more than gold

  To give for this new love of thine,
I'll prove thee what I once foretold—
  The heart to bleed shall not be mine.

"SOUVENIR DU IER MARS, 1815." *

(RETURN FROM ELBA.)

I.

'TWAS here the landing? here they pitched the tent
Till midnight, when the fatal march began
That yet once more, despite the nations' ban,
Shook earth a hundred days? and such event

Marked like a petty road-side accident!—
Not thus, not thus, O giant Corsican,
Uprose the shaft in that ambitious plan
Which I had formed for such a monument.

Not thus, but glittering with all the gold
Thy glory cost the Gaul, and thy disgrace;
While mounting toward thine image, as of old,

The burnished mass was fashioned to enchase
A million skulls—thy legend briefly told;
And all the sea was blood about the base.

GOLFE JOUAN (near Cannes, France), 1874.

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* Composed before a small column bearing this inscription which stands by the road near the spot where Napoleon landed.

II.

O Tyrant, we are small as thou art great,
  But mid the rabble thou didst so despise
  Be some that look the gods between the eyes
And fear not. Yea, be some that dare to rate

Their halo but a mask: and when in state
  I raised thy cursed genius to the skies,
  'Twas there to strip thee of thine old disguise
And join to endless fame eternal hate.

But all was done that I had hoped to do,
  By him who reigned thine heir and blood-in-law,
  Late Prussia's high Purveyor to the Maw,

When, with himself and mighty retinue,
  He left the lion's skin beneath her paw,
And made Sedan a bastard Waterloo.

IN THE FOREST OF COMPIÈGNE.

DARK as the mystic wood of Domremy
Wherein compassion's voice grew audible
Are these deep shades, and as I wander, still
I think of thee, brave Joan, and envy thee:

For thou, ere taken while too loath to flee,
Before yon city's gate, didst all fulfil;
And neither Rouen's fire nor priestly skill
Could stay the working of the "sorcery."

And I too hear the *voices* manifold;
Till night and day with all my heart I yearn
To work their will, ere heart and all be cold;

But sorrow's legions yet neglect or spurn
The faith that now could lead them, while the old
Is powerless to save—or e'en to burn.

To President Grant, *on reading the cable dispatch concerning his* Secretary of War; *Paris, March 3, 1876.*

ANOTHER down? Ye gods! and can it be
That in your vast, inexplicable ire
Little and great must tumble till the mire
Cover them all? O strange fatality!

But courage, Grant! Although these things we see
Are made to rend the bosom and inspire
Sorrow in stones, take heart, for evils dire
Assail the purest when the gods decree.

Bacchus, the boss of some old whiskey ring,
Worked such a spell on Midas, we are told,
And everything he touched was turned to gold;

But as the golden age when he was king
Has changed to iron, if all that you uphold
Should turn to steel, 'twere not astonishing.

EARLY SPRING.

TO ——.

HOW sweet to breathe these perfumes and to share
The calm rejoicing and the gentle mirth,
While nature, radiant from the bonds of birth,
Glows in her vernal ardor and is fair.

While yet no flower falls to waken care,
Nor aught foretells the weary winter's dearth,
But soft voluptuous languor fills the earth,
And love is latent in the very air.

'Tis early spring, dear girl, within thy heart,
And thou wouldst ever idly dream away
The precious hours that so soon depart;

But I, alas, beneath the burning ray
Of summer's sun, now count with bitter smart
The days that rest:—and wilt thou still delay?

UPON THE PROPOSITION OF AMNESTY FOR THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS.

O JUSTICE, twin-born sister of bright Truth,
I too would raise a voice for amnesty;
But not like theirs, a ready-granted plea
For men misled, whose miserable youth

Was left to God's protection, and the tooth
Of famished envy; who could hope to see
The dawning of the day that is to be
But in red flame. No, these have earned thy ruth.

I plead for such as having wine and meat
And knowledge, thrust these out, and let them fall
A prey to demagogues; for such as greet

That man their saviour who can best enthrall;
For chieftains dreadful only in the street;
And all the band ecclesiastical.

PARIS, March, 1876.

AFTER DINNER.

SWEET scents are floating on the wave:
Such perfume as the tropic shore
Sends back the sea, when day is o'er,
Upon the cooling breeze it gave.

I hear the moonlit waters lave
The vessel's side, a distant oar
Dip lazily; and more and more
Remote, the singing of a slave.

Blest vision of the summer seas!
'Twas thus in youth when years ago
I sailed amid the Caribbees.

And shall I give my life to woe
While yet I find such thoughts as these
In one small glass of Curaçoa?

ANOTHER TERM.

I DREAMT I saw St. Peter at the gate
(The mind is given to wandering at night),
And clouds of angels thinly clad in white
Were pushing to get in, for it was late.

The Porter checked their names upon his slate,
And all went well, till, lifting up his light,
He looked at one suspiciously, despite
His muffler and assurance, and cried, "Wait!"

He waited, but when all were in he said,
"Now, look here, Peter, listen—I affirm
That more than twenty thousand years have fled

"Since I first asked; now, isn't there a germ
Of pity in you, man?" P. shook his head—
"Go back to hell and serve another term!"

PARIS, April 8, 1876.

SAD is the flower, O Sun, that decks the way
Too soon; while yet the wind of winter blows,
And blissful are the blossoms that unclose
Their tender petals to the warmth of May.

Sad is the soul, O Truth, that sees thy ray
Too soon; and blest, ah, doubly blest are those
Who linger dreaming till their sweet repose
Is broken by the warmer beam of day.

Now joyous nature holds the vernal rite
And worships thee beneath the cloudless sky,
O Sun, from whom is life and all delight:

Yet one that loves thy bounty breathes a sigh:—
Ah, wherefore whisper, seeing all so bright,
O Truth, that e'en by this the Sun shall die?

April, 1876.

ROUGE ET NOIR.

(*In the garden at Monte-Carlo, Monaco.*)

ALL gone at last; all, all! By god, an ace!
Three ten-spots and an ace, to thirty-two!
And at the limit!—All! and not a sou
To pay for a dispatch.—Ah, damn the place!

And yet how beautiful! with what a grace
Those tranquil palms stand out against the blue
Of sea and sky, and that soft, dreamy hue
The moonlight makes along the mountains' base.

They've chosen well!—an Eden to conceal
The serpent.—Bah! 'twere nothing did we mar
Only our fortunes; it's the loss of zeal,

The drought that leaves the heart a shrivelled scar
As empty as this purse—what's that I feel?—
By Jove, a *louis!* and the rhyme is *noir!*

"Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream:"

SHAKSPEARE, Sonnet 129.

OH, the strong, strange emotion, bitter-sweet,
That fills my weary bosom as I ride
Along these lanes, and note on every side
The woods and fields that knew my childish feet.

Men stare at me, but all the ripening wheat
Bows and is glad; the brook by which I sighed
Told an old tale and laughed; and, dignified,
My friends the trees stretch out their arms to greet.

Ah, yes, 'twas there while resting from my play
I dreamt of future years, that used to seem
So full of promise and so far away.

Poor child! they come and go, but none redeem
The worthless pledge; they pass, and each new day
But dims the memory of that fond dream.

WALLINGFORD, DELAWARE CO., PA., July, 1875.

AUGUST 15th, 1875.

I.

I NE'ER had seen the moonlit summer night
More beautiful; above, the stars were drowned
In brightness, and below upon the ground
A distant haze blent all in one delight.

Along the stream a line of denser white
Lay heavily; and nearer, stretched around,
The wood stood still and slept without a sound;
While Time's swift wing beat on in silent flight.

No change; alas, no change, but all as fair
And tranquil as the placid sleep of faith,
And in my poor worn heart—despair, despair!

No change,—and all my hope was changed to death:
For I had heard upon the midnight air
Life's saddest sound,—a mother's dying breath.

II.

GONE, gone! The gentle heart that unsubdued
Could cheer us in the gloom of death's delay
Would throb no more: the hand that yesterday
Still answered mine; the lids so often dewed

With tears by me; the lips that e'er renewed
Forgiveness—gone! Gone the last chance to pay
Love with fair deeds: and left to comfort me—
The memory of my own ingratitude.

O misery!—ah, could I but deceive
My sorrow with a little hope; but be
Like them that shut their eyelids and believe.

Relentless Truth, look what I bear for thee!—
They talk of grief that never learned to grieve;
And yet they say we doubt from vanity!

A BROKEN PROMISE.

THIS coming death-day soon will make the third,
Mother, and all my grief be more by three;
But you've forgot the promise given me:
Ah, mother, mother, mother, but one word!

Is it my fault?—I know their prating stirred
My anger, but I always tried to be
Fair; and I've watched so long! why can't I see?
I've listened, but my tears are all I've heard.

And if my doubts be true? And if the flame
Died with the light when that last kiss grew cold?
O miserable charlatans that came

Between us for a little sum of gold,
Where are you now?—A faith? Ah, yes,—the same;
Divides our hearts and fortunes like the old.

To "SITTING BULL," *on receiving the news of his victory over U. S. troops.*

WELL done, Dakotah! Though good men and brave
Be fallen, and beneath the wind and sun
Wait for a grave, well done! I say; well done!
Their blood be not on thee, but them that drave

Thy tribe to war; not thee, for thou canst lave
Thy red hands clean in wrong. Our greed alone
Is guilty; and the vengeful balls that won,
Behind the true heart, heedless, sought the knave.

Yea, chief, strike hard! Though fate hath doomed thy race,
And cruel progress hails the stern decree,
Strike hard! for man's defence is good to see.

Yea, turn, and take the death-wound in the face,
That on your tomb a friendly hand may trace—
They died in arms against their destiny.

EAUX-BONNES, BASSES PYRÉNÉES, Sept. 9, 1876.

ACROSTIC TO ——.

WHILE yet I knew thee not, when some fair thought
Importuned me to give its beauty birth,
Like one who *might have been*, I mourned the dearth
That time misspent in wayward youth had wrought.

Then said I to myself,—"And hadst thou sought
However much to mend thy meagre worth,
O fool! thou wouldst have lived and passed from earth
Unknown, and all thy toil had been for nought."

But since I saw thy face, and felt the thrill
Each word from those sweet lips hath power to raise,
My keen remorse is such as nought can still.

Irrevocable curse of wasted days!—
Now had I but a tithe of Petrarch's skill,
E'en Laura's fame should fade before thy praise.

TO ——.

NAY, judge me not, nor this poor heart of mine,
As thou art wont to do when others kneel,
For, all unworthy as I am, I feel
What thou canst never know, nor words define.

Bigot am I in love, and though the shrine
I worship at awakens all men's zeal,
I hold they lack the grace that can reveal
The mystery which maketh love divine.

Then pardon me if earnestness too deep
To brook control bring words that seem severe—
Alas, and can it be I've made thee weep?

Nay, pity me! the storm is over, dear,
And all the passions that offended sleep,
For thou hast quelled them with a single tear.

LA FORNARINA.

"WHO was la Fornarina?" Raphael
Knew more of that than I can teach thee, dear,
For stories differ; but there's one thing clear—
Whoe'er she was, he must have loved her well.

A Roman girl, low-born, if what they tell
Be true; a beauty sure; but less severe
Than one would judge, if her own traits appear
In that calm face on which he loved to dwell.

At times, when art was powerless to wean
The lover from his love till eventide,
They placed her on the scaffold by his side.

He took from passion all that youth could glean
And then he died.—"And how?"—ah—well—he
died—
As I would die wert thou my Fornarine.

PEACE.

CHEER !
Why
Sigh ?
Hear,

Dear ;
Dry
Thy
Tear.

Life's
So
Short,

Strife's
No
Sport.

MY LADY'S HAIR.

BLONDE are the locks I love; in hue
  Like summer wheat toward harvest day
  When round the fields the warm winds play
And make them wave as waters do.

Blonde are my lady's own, wherethrough
  Her features, worth Petrarca's lay,
  Take tinge of gold, that melts away
To leave the perfect rose anew.

No man resists when charms so bright
  Decoy, beneath so sweet a snare;
None. If they tell the tale aright,

  The maid she has to tend her hair
For one whole hour every night
  Combs out the hearts entangled there.

MY LADY'S MOLE.

MY lady has below her chin,
  Just where the collar shows her neck,
  A wicked little brownish speck
No bigger than a pin.

It isn't patched upon the skin
  Like those with which some beauties deck
  A pretty face, but for my wreck
The Devil wove it in.

'Twould give a saint an appetite—
  That space between her collar's roll—
It looks so white.

  If I were sure I have a soul
I'd offer it for one good bite
  Beneath that mole.

MY LADY'S NOSE.

I'LL do what poet ne'er did yet,
As far as I know,—that's compose
A sonnet to my lady's nose:—
'Tis somewhat "Marie Antoinette,"

Commanding, arched, and proudly set,
But not too long; and though she knows
What good wine is, the driven snow's
Not nearly so immaculate.

If by mishap we disagree
'Tis sometimes here my lady shows it,
And then 'twould do you good to see

The lofty way in which she throws it:
But, ah, 'tis always dear to me,
And pretty—even when she blows it.

MY LADY'S EAR.

MY lady has the sweetest ear !—
A perfect little rosy shell !—
In which the tales that lovers tell,
That lovers tell, and ladies fear,

But never quite refuse to hear,
Have left an echo, there to dwell
And make the blush perpetual ;
(I wonder if my meaning's clear?)

If she were only fond of verse
I'd fill the little shell with rhyme ;
But that would be a waste, or worse ;

For when I think I'm most sublime
She yawns, which makes me want to curse,
And knocks me wholly out of time.

MY LADY'S FEET.

OF all the pretty little feet
  Since those that slipped when Adam fell
  There's not a pair that can excel
My lady's; really it's a treat

To see her cross a muddy street,
  Her dainty *bottines* fit so well;
  And then her ankle!—shall I tell?
But no, we'll not be indiscreet.

One day when too much exercise
  Had caused those little shoes to smart her,
She deigned to let me loose the ties!—

  St. Crispin, cobbler, saint and martyr,
Would risk his all in paradise
  If once he got so near her garter.

I'D GATHERED in my lady's bonnet
Just charms enough to make a salad,
And by the rule poetical had
Mixed them in a little sonnet.

Not all were there, depend upon it,
For every feature's claim is valid,
And citing all would fill a ballad ;
Which, to my taste, had overdone it.

But woman, bless her, ne'er declines
That dish, and seems to think you wrong her,
When once she tastes, unless she dines ;

My lady wanted more and stronger :—
"That's nice," she said, "but—fourteen lines !—
Why don't you make your sonnets longer ?"

MY LADY'S MOUTH.

HOW shall I praise my lady's mouth,
Whose beauty makes description vain?—
Like perfume wafted o'er the main
To seamen toiling toward the south

Her warm breath is; and like the drouth
Of parchèd throats that drink for rain
The salt sea water, is the pain
Her moist, sweet lip engendereth.

And that dear voice! its notes might be
As wine to what is worse than this—
My worn heart's thirst for sympathy.

And none could find the cure amiss;
For any little word, to me,
Were dearer than the fondest kiss.

LOVE-LONGING.

(See D. G. ROSSETTI's beautiful sonnet, "Love-Sweetness.")

NOT that the fragrant shadow of her hair
Is on thy face, nor that her hands are wed
A tender lily wreath about thy head,
I'm envious; nor that her features wear

The love her soft remembering sighs declare:
Not that her bosom's white is turned to red
Beneath thy lips which on her own had fed;—
Not therefore; no, my lady too is fair.

But because thou hast known that sweeter thing
For want of which my soul finds nothing sweet—
A listener to the song that it would sing.

Because thy spirit, when its pinions beat
The lonesome air "in cloud-girt wayfaring,"
Feels "breath of kindred plumes against its feet."

WHILE yet a child, before the joys of spring
Had come and gone till all were known to me,
I set an orchard out with many a tree
Of goodly stock for plenteous harvesting.

And though the sweet birds came to light and sing,
It seemed the far-off day would never be;
And, heedless of their note, impatiently
I waited for the time of fruit-bearing.

The time has come: the trees are now full-grown;
And o'er my head their branches interlaced
Bear fruits of varied flavor, all my own.

But, nearly in my reach, I let them waste:
While, listening to the bees' unwearied drone,
I sit and muse, and hardly care to taste.

AMBITION.

HOW long ago it is since hope was mine:
  How long ago since first it seemed to me
  As if, at most, a few short years would see
The full accomplishment of my design.

Alas, 'twas ere that loveliest of the nine
  Fair fickle daughters of Mnemosyne
  Had made a mess of my virginity,
And cast me off, and left me to repine.

In those old times I dreamt my song must sway
  The nations:—now, my life would not seem vain
If later (shaving, as I was to-day)

  Some lathered lover of old rhyme should deign
To read my torn leaf twice ere cast away,
  And with his razor dull forget the pain.

BYRON.

O SINGER of the summit and the sea,
O lover of the tempest, that divined
The language of the lightning and the wind,
Byron! the very air is full of thee.

Thy song was of the mountains and the free
Far-rolling ocean, where thine ears could find
Relief from rattle of the chains that bind
The tortured spirit of humanity.

A forest is thy poem, where my soul
Roams on through tropic luxury to climb
The snow-clad glorious heights that top the whole.

But there be those that root amid the slime
For noxious weeds; and when they find, extol
The little kitchen-gardeners of rhyme.

In view of the Villa Diodati, near Geneva.

CERVANTES.

THOU wast a poet after my own heart,
Cervantes.—When all Europe's hopes and fears
Followed Don Juan, yet a boy in years
Lepanto saw thee play the hero's part.

And when thy fortune led thee to this mart
Of Islam's foes, although a slave, the tears
Of twenty thousand captives in Algiers
Fell fewer for thy courage and thine art.

Ennobled by the hand that held the sword
With all the soldier's virtues, frank and free,
Thy pen spoke plain to rabble, priest and lord;

Nor was the recompense refused to thee;
For parasite and pander swelled the horde
That mocked thy wounds, thine age and poverty.

ALGIERS.

L'ORDRE MORAL.

"THE ILLUSTRIOUS MARSHAL MACMAHON," "LOYAL SOLDIER," ETC., ETC.

(See the Bonapartist, Orleanist, or Legitimist, alias "Conservative," newspapers of the day.)

O MEN of "moral order," saviors, ye
That swell your praises like an empty bag,
Or breeches pocket that conserves a flag,
Who is this valiant pink of loyalty?

O men of "moral order," is it he,
Your baffled leaders took to help them gag
The mouth of France? of whom it was their brag
He'd play her false to serve your monarchy?

O patriots of fame immaculate,
Is't he that when the nation asked for breath,
But when the Empire's cause grew desperate,

Risked all for Cæsar's crown? (this Cæsar saith,)*
And threw against the loaded dice of fate
When every scullion knew the choice was death?

PARIS, Feb. 15, 1876.

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* See Louis Napoleon's letter to Sir John Burgoyne, after Sedan.

THE MARSHAL'S MANIFESTO.

(Free translation.)

FRENCHMEN! The glorious Marshal-President,
Duke of Magenta, Reichshoffen, Sedan,
Et autres lieux, now bids you straightway scan
This manifesto and admonishment:—

Sacrêe canaille! The deputies you sent
A year ago were nearly every man
Both unpapistic and republican,
An insult, damn it, to my government.

Now hear! I've sent them back, and lest you grope
In ignorance of what your chief's about,
I've chosen men (conjointly with the pope)

Imperio-royalist beyond a doubt.
If they're elected, as I truly hope,
All will be well; but if they're not, look out!

Sept., 1877.

THE MARSHAL'S RUBICON.

THIS is indeed a very funny man.
Because a gang of sharpers, priests and fools
That count on him to found three different rules
Have dubbed the numskull, "Hero of Sedan,"

Our hen-pecked king-maker has changed his plan;
And heedless of the world that ridicules,
He now would turn his masters into tools
To bridge a little private Rubicon.

A pretty thing in Cæsars, by my soul!—
Was it for this the nation purged her heart
Of that old longing for a chief's control?

Was it, her back still aching with the smart,
To take the lash from an inglorious *drole?*
The Bastard's name at least was Bonaparte.

Sept., 1877.

ANOTHER "OFFENCE."

ANOTHER villanous "offence!"—
A worthy holder of the crayon,
With laudable desire to play on
A cord that's now no longer tense,

Portrayed with due magnificence
Our glorious Maréchal MacMahon
Upon the steed he rode the day on
Which he was hit by Providence. *

"My faith, a knowing eye; yes, very,—
The horse," says one whose Journal ranks
Among the "reds;" a commentary

---

* This wound in the hip was so opportune that it forced the Marshal to quit his saddle just at the moment when things grew desperate, and thus relieved him from the disagreeable duty of signing the Capitulation of Sedan.

Whose Machiavelian malice, thanks
To * Badinguet's Judiciary,
Has cost the wretch five hundred francs.

---

* Nickname of Napoleon III.

MACMAHON SOLILOQUIZES.

"A PRETTY mess!—They promised me last May
If I'd dissolve they'd run the thing in style,
And, damn it, now they've made me risk my pile,
I find the very rogues I sent away.

A *coup d'état* would suit 'em, would it, eh?
Of course; and how about the rank and file?
There's old Dufaure,* I might try him a while,
But, Lord! just think what Madam M. would say!

What's to be done?—a second dissolution?
Why, all my foxy friend de Broglie's art
Can't make the Senate sanction this solution:

And then the deputies before they start
Must vote the budget—Hang their Constitution!
I would to heaven I were Bonaparte."

PARIS, Nov. 21, 1877.

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* A very moderate republican who had already been the Marshal's prime-minister.

THE MARSHAL'S SECOND CAPITULATION.

(After the Elections.)

"THIS quarter of an hour, Rabelais,* 's thine.
That insubordinate rascallion Fate,
The Communist! has said, 'Capitulate,'
And this time I myself shall have to sign.

Just think, the very Orleanists decline
To see me through! the very men whose prate
About devotion brought me to the strait
I'm in. And now it's yield or else resign.

My motto's 'Here I am, and here I stay;'
But what a pity for a son of Mars
To smear his valiant nose in such a way.

Sedan was nothing to it; this is farce,
And that was tragedy where one could play
At getting badly wounded in the hip."

PARIS, Dec. 14, 1877.

* "Rabelais's quarter of an hour" is the time of reckoning.

THE MARSHAL'S "MINISTRY OF AFFAIRS."

(Impromptu upon hearing of the attempted *coup d'état.*)

AH, traitor, that was what you called "Affairs,"
Was it?—Affairs in which the rue Montmartre
Has seen this Rochebouët, the hound, take part
Before, with grape and canister for wares.

Ah, "Loyal Soldier."—So my pink "that shares
The world's esteem," my "Bayard" tried to start
Un petit commerce à la Bonaparte?—
I knew you, hypocrite, with all your airs.

You missed it, did you? Damn you, you forgot
That which the meanest soldier never can
Forget; you thought that seven years could blot

Metz and Bazaine, MacMahon and Sedan.
Go hang, you scoundrel !—Troops for such a plot ?
Marshals and generals, yes—but not a man.

PARIS, Dec. 22, 1877.

The Cabinet of General Rochebouët, "without political bias," was to devote itself to affairs and conciliation. As colonel of artillery during the *coup d'état* of 1851, the general had qualified himself for this mission by the massacres which took place in the neighborhood of the *rue Montmartre.*

FRENCH FACTIONS IN 1877.

I.

IMPERIALISTS.

FIRST of the several factions on the list
  Of those that seek to rule or ruin Gaul
  (The only one with any chance at all),
I place the party called imperialist.

An eagle, that the physiognomist
  Named vulture, once was emblematical
  Of this odd lot; but since Napoleon's fall,
A famished crow with carrion in his fist.

Their hope was, first to shake the nation's trust
  In freedom by their schemes, and then to see
The people take a "savior" in disgust.

  But this has failed; and now they all agree
That friend MacMahon should use force, and must,
  Or else they'll doubt his famous loyalty.

II.

ORLEANISTS.

NEXT come the Dukes and gentlemen of note
Who own allegiance to the county Paris ;
Great friends of liberty, whose constant care is
Never to let you know it by a vote.

Too weak to take the nation by the throat
Themselves (it's not that principles embarrass),
Their remedy if driven to despair is
To swallow Cæsar as an antidote.

Believe it on this wise and save your soul :
Six days He labored, and it came to pass
That on the seventh, viewing o'er the whole,

He started with a—"Bless me, what an ass !
Who's to keep all this rabble in control ?"
And next day made He the "directing class."

III:

LEGITIMISTS.

THIRD, and the least unworthy of the three,
We have the partisans of Henri Cinq;
Marquis and dowagers made fit by rank
To rule the nation o'er a cup of tea.

Their honor, all Quixotic though it be,
Rings sound, as rang the answer firm and frank
When d'Orléans begged their king on bended shank
To smut the banner of the *fleurs de lys*.

But some whose sires bore cross beyond the sea
Envy the knights imperial their deeds
And long to turn *chevaliers d'industrie*.

For them Amphitryon's the one that feeds
And Capet's scruple want of energy:—
"Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds."

IV.

CLERICALS.

BACK in the dark behind the rest of these,
But leagued against the nation with them all,
The never-tiring party clerical
Works for the cause of Christ upon its knees.

It has for shield against its enemies
Night, and a sword that's dipped in zealot's gall;
For only motto this one word, "enthrall;"
For crest the crown of Pious with the Keys.

Its members priests or undeveloped spawn
Of priests, whose bloated, careless lips have blessed
Each tyrant that would deign to let them fawn.

Who fat their lecherous buttocks on the best
Of every land, and rule by right of brawn
Wherever woman loves to be confessed.

PARIS, Dec., 1877.

THE SACRED HEART.

IN Paris on the hill they call Montmartre
They're putting up, by way of expiation
For all the sins of this most sinning nation,
A vast cathedral to the Sacred Heart:

That is, they want to, but it seems the start
Is hindered by an ancient excavation,
Wherein before beginning their foundation
Our friends have seen their dwindling funds depart.

Now Pious swears indulgences from Rome
Shall build the thing, or by his crown of glory
He'll starve the Devil out of house and home;

And, estimating by the lower story,
It's reckoned that before they reach the dome
There'll not a soul be left in purgatory.

PARIS, Nov., 1877.

SISTER SIMPLICE.

THROUGH Arden wood they came, each little pair
Prattling about the fun they'd had that day,
And toddling back reluctant from their play
To meet the vesper chimes that sought them there.

And at their head a novice young and fair,
Simplice, the teacher, meekly led the way;
When sudden, bounding toward the helpless prey,
A dog came on, all foam, with eyes aglare.

"Run, run," she screamed; then knelt with arms stretched wide
And caught the beast, and struggled till her cries
Brought help, and they were saved for whom she died.

Catholic martyr, when my soul denies
Because of creed a saint so sanctified
May death in pity close my blinded eyes.

PARIS, Dec., 1877.

ON THE DEATH OF PIOUS IX.

AND so "thy hash is cooked," thou poor old man.
Well, many a worse than thou hath held the key,
And many worn the crown whose infamy
Had better graced the losing. Partisan

Of errors since condemned, thy reign began
Amid the shouts of them thy will made free;
But not for long; such schemes of liberty
Might suit Mastai, but not the Vatican.

No, and the change that made thy bounty wage
This war upon the times, and vilify
That which thine own heart held in appenage

But proves that faith and love have rent their tie.
Proves that faith, too, must soon, o'ercome with age,
Say "sono fritto," and lie down and die.

PARIS, Feb. 8, 1878.

"During the night he took strong doses of quinine; he suffered greatly and said: *sono fritto* (sic)."

ON THE REPUBLICAN GAINS IN THE ELECTIONS OF MARCH, 1878.

THE deed is surely better than ye know.
  This gradual awakening despite
  The holy league of priest and parasite;
This constancy through seven years that show

No faltering; this steady progress, slow
  But sure, toward the form that must unite
  All France in one; this thing shall give you might
To face for freedom's sake a different foe.

Already do the German and the Slave
  Prepare; already haggle which shall trace
  The boundary dividing what your race

May yet call home; but this, if aught, shall save.
  Be one, and when they come 'twill give you grace
To hurl them back or make your soil their grave.

PARIS, March 4, 1878.

I WOULD to heaven I'd been born a priest.
No turnip-eating Trappist—they're a sham;
But furnisher of sacerdotal balm
To something swell, a baroness at least.

How jolly it would be to share the feast,
And then retire at ease,—I worship calm,—
To conscientiously confess Madame,
With Monsieur mounting guard till one had ceased.

I always have admired the Roman way
Of keeping and extending domination:
In order to perpetuate their sway

And shape the youthful mind by education,
They gain the women—proof as clear as day
There's nothing like a priest for penetration.

I LOVED a dame of thirty years
  Whose face and figure could defy
  Suspicion of antiquity.
I loved her eyes, her nose, her ears,

I loved her smile, her frown, her tears
  (She wept sometimes, the Lord knows why,
  But then she'd only risk one eye)—
In fact, for love I'd no compeers.

To reach her heart in lovers' wise
  With all the skill that I possess
I built a solid bridge of sighs;

  Which only led me to distress!
For not a thing beneath the skies
  Could enter but "that next new dress."

À L'OPÉRA.

I'VE sought them where the spring begets
The sweetest flowers that blow,
I've sought them by the rivulets
New-fed with alpine snow,

I've sought the little anchorets
In every land I know,
But such a bed of violets
Not one of them can show.

Where all eyes gloat
Without reserve,
The modest bouquet rests;

Beneath thy proud imperial throat,
Beneath thy shoulders' ample curve,
Between thy perfect breasts.

THE MAN IN THE MOON.

FROM morn till night she worked away
  Beside her bird on the window-sill,
  And both together they sang with a will,
For April was changing into May.

And she had promised that every day
  She'd save up all her extra sous
  Till they had enough to go and choose
A sweet little wife for her bird so gay.

And she hurried her needle at such a rate
  That, long before the first of June,
Her pretty companion had found a mate.

  But the poor little girl grew thoughtful soon,
And she'd sit by her open window late
  And gaze for hours at the man in the moon.

BACKGROUNDS.

THE hangings of our *cabinet* were blue
  At dinner, and each time she turned her head
  She looked so fair, so perfect, that I said
For such a profile 'twas the only hue.

And when I said it, 'pon my soul 'twas true!
  But room and seat had changed as wooing sped,
  And all through supper I was sure that red
Made far the better background of the two.

How mighty is the force of circumstance!
  It changeth good to bad, or dark to light,
And turneth wisdom into ignorance.

  Why, that same evening, ere we said good-night,
I'd sworn if any color could enhance
  The beauty of her features, it was white.

A SKETCH.

TWO children talking by a balustrade:
  Below upon the walk, outside the stair,
  All summer-white, with massy raven hair
Falling in curls, a languid, lisping maid

Unleaves a rose. Her shoulders' curve has laid
  The bosom's rich warm dusky promise bare,
  But this she knows not, while her black eyes stare
At nothing, hardly heeding what is said.

Three steps above a blue-eyed, earnest boy
  Leans over on the ample stone at ease,
With every feature beaming new-felt joy.

  And fearful lest the transient vision cease,
He lengthens with the license bards employ
  The story of the famed Hesperides.

A SWISS SCENE.

HOW sweet it is to linger all alone
  Beside the shore, while summer skies are bright,
  And watch the little boats with steady flight
Follow the wind toward the setting sun.

Their painted sails the last ray falls upon
  Spread wing-and-wing, and, wonderfully white,
  Seem really wings of birds about to light
Upon the water when their day is done.

They come to me out of the distant haze
  A scattered fleet before a gentle wind,
Laden with precious thoughts of other days;

  And just as when I watched them from behind
At starting, when they took their different ways
  New-painted on my nursery window-blind.

NEAR GENEVA.

TO ——.

THOU oft hast told me how, when night
  Had blent the garden's wealth of green,
  And high o'er Leman's wave serene
The moonbeam tipped the mountain height,

From yonder window, robed in white,
  Thou'dst gaze as on a "fairy scene,"
  While gentle music bade thee glean
Thy sweet heart's fill of calm delight:—

The full moon shines across the lake;
  I hear a soft Italian air;
The little ripples hardly break;

  And all as then is passing fair—
But thou art gone! and these but wake
  The dreamy echoes of despair.

"La blessure guérit, mais la marque reste."

ROUSSEAU, NOUVELLE HÉLOISE.

HAIL, Leman! once again I rest
Beside thy waters, fairest lake,
And in their liquid azure slake
The burning thirst that sears my breast.

O now, where all thy banks are blest
With Julie's love, for Julie's sake
Remember all my wrongs, and break
The spell by which my soul's oppressed.

By Clarens's shades that veiled a love
Profounder than the depths of thee,
And purer than the snows above,—

And by the rocks of Meillerie,—
O send the heart I'm worthy of
To cast this passion out of me!

"THEIR faith may be groundless I grant, but if those
Who believe are made happy, if trusting they find
That life's burden grows lighter to bear, is it kind
To deprive them of all the relief it bestows?

Why teach them a truth that must add to their woes?
Would you tell of the storm to the deaf and the blind?
If the flash of the lightning and howl of the wind
Were unnoticed, unknown, would you break their repose?"

Well said; if they can, let them slumber, but pray,
Is it our fault they hear us? must we that have eyes
Lie still lest our feet wake the blind on the way?

Are we to be blamed for the light in the skies
If, seeing the dawn, we prepare for the day?
Go talk to the sun and forbid it to rise.

A FUTURE LIFE.

"A FUTURE LIFE?" I hate the very sound.
Does man so feel for man, is earth so warm
With love in all its workings multiform
That we must turn away and cast around

For worlds to vent it on? Hath reason found
A remedy against the dismal swarm
Of Nature's ills,—the pestilence,—the storm,—
That it must seek a task beyond her bound?

Be thine this life, and whether prose or rhyme
Live it, and leave the next, if next there be,
To those unfortunates who make a crime

Of all that's love and joy and sympathy,
And like a cock-roach on the brink of time,
Go wag their feelers at eternity.

THE sweetest visions haunt me ever
When no word's nigh;
The fairest thought escapes endeavor,
Born but to die.

Like hearts the weary wide waves sever,
That ache and sigh,
So yearn my thought and word, but never
Find wings to fly.

Yon birds that keep the wild wood ringing
All day long,
Are joyous, each emotion bringing

Notes as strong.
Ah, would that I had voice for singing
My whole soul's song.

MY PHILOSOPHY.

I SAW good men at strife because a creed
That half held sacred half had learned to shun;
And while their bodies rotted in the sun
I thought;—I thought of all the strength we need

To war with nature;—how men's interests, freed
From misconception, still must ever run
Athwart; and ere my pondering was done
I heard from lips of wounds that seemed to plead,—

"Teach fact and judge not. Let the world have light.
Show all to all, that all men's eyes may see
The best and worst; that stamped on all men's sight,

Some sharp, some dull, the selfsame star may be
The guide for all. Facts and not creeds unite."—
Which forms the whole of my philosophy.

EMANCIPATION.

YEA, truly 'twas a glorious thing to set
The black man free; but was it worth the war
That forty millions might change place with four?
Was't worth the unnumbered dead, the countless debt,

The long-enduring enmity which yet
Divides the land, that half a hundred score
Of demagogues might own us? might restore
The yoke for us, and laugh to see us sweat?

Where are the poets, statesmen, warriors brave,
Who sang and worked and fought till the disgrace
Of negro servitude had found a grave?

Are all the champions of a downtrod race,
Who howled for freedom when the black was slave,
Dead? Or has every living man a place?

July, 1878.

100° IN THE SHADE.

'TWAS August on the banks of Delaware,
And in his bed a hardened sinner lay;
While, anxious for the soul that ebbed away,
A village pastor called the man to prayer.

'Twas August; not a single breath of air
Disturbed the glorious sun's prolific ray,
And o'er the buzzing of the flies at play
A weak voice answered thus, no words to spare,—

"Hell? Do you think that I'm afraid of hell?
Haven't I farmed all seasons, wet and dry,
For forty year? Has any heated spell

Set me to growling about this here sky?"
The good man owned he'd born the climate well;
"Then go 'way, parson, I'm prepared to die."

MIDSUMMER.

HOW sweet to listen to the dove
When all the rest forget to sing,
And watch the swallows wantoning,
And butterflies the gold whereof

Comes sinking through the skies above
Like feathers from an angel's wing.
What comfort in the proof they bring
Of perfect wisdom, perfect love.

Why is it when the heart is stirred
To praise of Him who rules on high,
Of Him who made our earth and sky

From nothing with a single word,
Why is it that the little bird
Will eat the butterfly?

A PARABLE.

A CERTAIN farm had long been deemed the best
Of all the country round; but war, neglect,
And folly joining, fields that once were decked
With plenty turned to swamp where vile weeds pressed.

And they were many brothers who possessed;
With minds like many ways that intersect;
All one in will to mend the fortune wrecked,
But differing each from all in all the rest.

Some simply wished to root away the weeds;
Some counselled prayer, and others counselled spoil;
Some sought the prophets of the new-born creeds;

And one there was for management and toil,
Till choice of varied crops and different seeds,
With time and culture, should renew the soil.

Aug., 1878.

TO J. R. LOWELL.

PARDON the freedom of a friend unknown;
Nor wonder even I usurp the name;
For he who soweth on the winds of fame,
As thou hast done, must reap what he hath sown.

I love thee, for thy sins are like my own:
I love thee, for thy burning lines proclaim
Thee too a traitor to thy country's shame,
And loyal to the right, and right alone.

O veteran, comrade of the few that stand
Where all the present and the past combine
To light the future, tell us, hath the land

Lost truth forever? Some whose faith like thine
Would more than worship, seek from strand to strand,
But where an altar stood is now a shrine.

Aug. 5, 1878.

UPON READING THE FOLLOWING SONNET BY MR. LONGFELLOW.

"ONCE upon Iceland's solitary strand
A poet wandered with his book and pen,
Seeking some final word, some sweet Amen,
Wherewith to close the volume in his hand.
The billows rolled and plunged upon the sand,
The circling seagulls swept beyond his ken,
And from the parting cloudrack now and then
Flashed the red sunset over sea and land.
Then by the billows at his feet was tossed
A broken oar; and carved thereon he read,
'Oft was I weary when I toiled at thee;'
And like a man who findeth what was lost
He wrote the words, then lifted up his head
And flung his useless pen into the sea."

BUT one (the least of those that loved his song,
And sought the secret of its melody),
With still-admiring reverence for plea,
Afar, unseen, had tracked his steps along:

Who, witness of the ill-deservèd wrong,
Approaching, caught the pen from out the sea,
And, brushing off the foam, beseechingly
Offered it back, with words that love made strong.—

"Master, I speak who fitly should obey:
For all thy lessons let me teach thee one,
Taught by thyself although forgot to-day;—

While light remains the task is never done.
'Morning and fervid noon have passed away?'
Behold the beauty of the setting sun."

Aug. 11, 1878.

THE WRITING OF THE ILIAD.

NO longer did the Pride of Ilion wait,
But fled before the friend of him laid low;
And swifter than a hound that hunts the roe,
Achilles followed on the wings of hate.

Twice had they passed the close-shut Scæan gate,
And twice the springs that feed Scamander's flow
(One warm that fumes, and one like melted snow),
When came a clash that stayed impending fate.

The poet, wincing, urged the race anew,
But bound as in a dream by sudden spell,
The Trojan stopped, nor could the Greek pursue.

Then once again clanged out the horrid knell;
And driving every vision from his view,
Came: "Ho—mer, don't you hear the dinner-bell?"

A "WATERSCAPE."

THE French fought hard, the British fleet
Had quite as much as it could do,
With each ship one or even two
Tough customers that meant to beat.

'Twas then his captain all replete
With classic knowledge (this is true)
At admiral, I wont say who,
Got off a speech as apt as neat.

"Now Victory stands clothed in doubt,
While o'er Patroclus Greeks and Trojans
Strain with sharp clash and horrid shout!"

And then was heard 'twixt two explosions:
"I've something else to think about;
G— d— your Greeks and Trojans!"

SPIRITISM.

I DEDICATE these lines to spiritism;
The real religio-philosophical.
Kind reader, if you've ever had the—*gale*
You'll know my feelings toward this Yankee schism.

I've not had either, but my catechism
Was just the thing to fill a hospital;
Thank fate, mine alimentary canal
Was coated with a layer of "egotism."

I've suffered though; I've suffered till the name
Is one with discord. Really something ought
To rise and answer their eternal pow-wows,

If only by its being to proclaim
A future life and show that not for naught
I damn them to the everlasting bow-wows.

WELL, well, I've lost my heart again to-day!
I wonder if that pretty little thing
Who came for chestnuts thought of rummaging
Among the basketful she took away.

She made me think of when I used to play
With just such girls, as happy as a king.
Her voice was like the birds' that used to sing
Years, years ago; and then so much to say.

The dogs had killed a rabbit—"what a shame!"—
Spelling she liked but not geography.—
Such lots of fun as soon as winter came.

That hurricane blew down an apple tree.—
Bran-bread and sugar pleased their horse: his name
Was like the man's.—Not ten yet: soon should be.

THE END.

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